

These are gridiron greats who also came upon many lesser known players with stories like Brent's. Mike Moseley, of the Buffalo Bills, suffered knee, neck, and back injuries that forced him to retire early and left him permanently disabled.

Initially, the NFL disability committee granted him benefits. In September 2004, a doctor hired by the NFL ruled that he could do sedentary work, and they cut off his benefits. This reminds me of when I started out practicing law. For a few years, I did insurance defense work. We had doctors that insurance companies would bring in and it didn't matter how bad somebody was hurt, they determined they weren't hurt very badly. That is what this reminds me of. Mike Moseley lost his home, his car, and his savings. His life has been torn apart.

Another example is Brian DeMarco, a lineman for the Jacksonville Jaguars. Similar to Mike, Brian was forced into an early retirement by injury. He was unable to navigate the disability system's redtape—even though his back was broken in 17 different places. Brian and his family were left homeless. He told the *Denver Post* that the NFL:

is a multibillion dollar business, and guys are giving their quality of life up for this sport. Just a little respect and dignity is all we want.

These stories illustrate a point the statistics confirm. According to one press report, almost two-thirds of former professional football players suffer injuries serious enough to require surgery, and almost half of all players retire due to injury.

But among the more than the 1,000 disability claims filed by former NFL players, about 30 percent have received approval. The rest are thrown in the trash bin, such as my friend from Reno, NV.

Brent Boyd was among the former players who testified before the Commerce Committee this past September. They told us how they feel abandoned and forgotten lost in endless doctor visits and redtape.

Daryl Johnson, who played 11 years as running back for the Cowboys, testified that he retired with 5 years remaining on his contract after suffering a herniated disc.

The Players' Association sent him for an evaluation with one of their doctors—not his own. He was not permitted to even bring his X rays or MRI results. Similar to so many others, his claim was denied.

After the hearing last September, and countless news stories, the NFL and the Players' Association have taken some steps to right the wrong.

Where before their approval process seemed a little more than ad hoc, they now apply standards used by the Social Security Administration to determine disability. We hope it is more effective.

They have also implemented the 88 Plan, which provides funds for a residential care facility or in-home care. The question is, Who are they going to give it to?

Brent Boyd, and so many like him, still suffer the pain of their injuries, still struggle to pay their bills on far less disability assistance than they deserve. Some suffer the inability to think properly because of the head trauma they suffered.

In the coming weeks, I will work with the NFL and the Players' Association and other retirees to ensure progress is being made.

As the bright lights shine on Super Bowl XLII this Sunday—and they are a multibillion dollar business, and they should help these people—I want Brent and his injured brothers to know they are not fighting in the shadows. They deserve a spotlight also.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

STIMULUS MARK-UP

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, last week, Americans saw something many of them thought they might never see: Speaker PELOSI, Minority Leader BOEHNER, and the President working as a team. Republicans and Democrats rose above politics and put the people and the economy first. And on Tuesday, the House passed their compromise stimulus plan by a vote of 385–35. Then all eyes turned to the Senate: Would we put our individual interests aside, or would we throw the whole plan into jeopardy by loading it down with gifts for anybody who came calling?

Apparently the temptation for giveaways was too great for some to resist. As soon as the bill hit the Senate, it started to look a lot like Christmas over here. Chairman BAUCUS added 10 new provisions before the bill was even considered in committee. Three more amendments were added in committee. You could almost hear Bing Crosby's voice coming out of the Finance Committee. And so the stimulus train is slowing grinding to a halt here in the U.S. Senate.

All of this only reinforces my view that the only way we'll get relief to the people soon enough for it to work will be to insist on speed over spending. And the only way to do that is to pass the bipartisan, House-passed bill. That way we can send it to the President for a signature—and get much needed relief into the hands of millions of Americans as quickly as they are now expecting it. This is the only way to pass an economic growth package that doesn't grow the government or raise taxes and that can be signed into law in a timely manner. The other option is to bring it to the floor, where we know it will only grow and slow under the weight of endless additional spending proposals. We need to act quickly. The majority leader called for a bill that is "timely." The House acted quickly. Now it is our turn.

We have a choice: We can accept Washington politics as usual and spend weeks and weeks arguing over how much more can be added to an already unwieldy bill or we can act right now and deliver a timely economic growth package with bipartisan support that can be signed into law now. We could get a bill down to the President in thirty seconds if we want to. The White House and the House have done their part. Now let's do our part. Let's vote on the House-passed bill, without any further delay.

HONORING OUT ARMED FORCES

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to pause for a moment so I may share with them the story of a soldier lost in battle. On January 5, 2007, MAJ Michael L. Mundell of Brandenburg, KY, and his unit were sent to secure a combat area in Fallujah, Iraq, after an American tank reported being struck by an improvised explosive device.

En route to the scene, a second explosive device went off near Major Mundell's vehicle, tragically taking his life. He was 47 years old.

Major Mundell served in the U.S. Army for over a decade before leaving active service to work as a civilian contractor to the armed forces. In November of 2005 he again volunteered for active duty. His wife Audrey tells us that Mike once told a friend "he was going over there to fight them so they couldn't come over here and hurt his children."

For his bravery in service, Major Mundell received numerous medals and awards, including two Meritorious Service Medals, the Bronze Star Medal and the Purple Heart.

Mr. President, Major Mundell was one of those who may have been born in one of the other 49 States but became Kentuckian by choice. Born in Pittsburgh, he grew up in Canonsburg, PA.

As a child, Mike developed a passion for military service. He wanted to grow up and drive tanks. When he was three, he handed his father an encyclopedia and asked him to read it to him.

His family says this began his lifelong love of reading. As an adult, he enjoyed Civil War history, and would often read more than a book a day. He also enjoyed mysteries and thrillers, and read through the Bible three times.

In 1977, Mike graduated from Canon-McMillan High School, home of the Big Macs. His wife Audrey liked to tease him that his high-school mascot was named after a hamburger, but Mike made his school proud on the football field.

Mike went on to graduate from Washington-Jefferson College in 1981 where he majored in history, participated in ROTC and played soccer.

After graduation, Mike realized his lifelong goal of becoming an Army officer when he received his commission as a second lieutenant. Assigned to Fort